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Administrator

Pruitt Has Long Record Of Opposing Environmental Regulations.

[CNN](#) (12/13, Kaczynski) reports on Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt's well-established anti-environmental regulation stance, which he has laid out over the years in various interviews and published pieces. In an interview on November 10, Pruitt "claimed the Trump administration would roll back EPA rules like the Clean Power Plan and Waters of the United States," and in 2014, Pruitt "said the best thing the government could do to create jobs would be to 'make sure the EPA is not being onerous upon the energy companies in this country.'" He has also very "consistently denied the scientific consensus on global warming," stating in an October 2016 interview that there is a "tremendous dispute...if it's true or not."

Editorial: Pruitt An "Ideal Candidate" To Reign In EPA.

An editorial in the [Washington Examiner](#) (12/13, Higgins) argues that Trump's nominee to lead the EPA, Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt is "an ideal candidate to come in and move the agency in a more productive direction." The Examiner criticizes the Obama administration for "expand[ing] EPA power in way that have harmed...states' economies, all without creating any appreciable corresponding benefit in terms of either global warming or human health." The EPA is also criticized for settling "quickly" with radical environmental groups on terms that favor the litigants but often "impose tougher rules that harm livelihoods," a practice which the Examiner claims Pruitt would effectively put an end to.

Rep. Pallone: Congress Should Reject Pruitt Nomination To Lead EPA. In an op-ed in [The Hill](#) (12/13, Pallone) Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-N.J.) writes that Trump's nomination of Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt essentially "hand[ing] the EPA over to an anti-science politician who has repeatedly filed lawsuits against the very agency he is now being nominated to lead." Citing Pruitt's "close ties with the oil and gas interests" throughout the entirety of his career, and his role in either initiating or joining lawsuit against EPA regulations, Rep. Pallone claims that Pruitt "will likely go to extremes to undermine the mission of the agency he's being nominated to run," therefore his nomination should be rejected.

Pruitt's Nomination Described As Result Of Polarization On Energy Issues. In an opinion piece in the [Washington Post](#), (12/13, Egan, Mullin) Patrick J. Egan and Megan Mullion, both associate professors of political science, discuss the polarization of environmental issues that led to the nomination of Pruitt. They claim that "the last time the EPA was led by such a deep skeptic of its core mission was under Ronald Reagan's first EPA administrator, Anne Gorsuch."

Air

Additional Reading.

- [EPA Formalizes Texas Nonattainment As Foes Prep Lawsuits. Greenwire.](#) (12/14)

Brownfields/Superfund/Other Cleanups

Additional Reading.

- EPA Set To Study Lead Contamination In Southside Soil. Chattanooga (TN) Times Free Press. (12/13)

Climate Change

Some Additions To Trump EPA Transition Team Favor Dismantling US Climate Efforts.

The Washington Post (12/13, Harvey) reports that recent additions to the Trump EPA transition team signal “that the climate efforts accomplished or begun in the past decade will be dismantled by the incoming administration — or at least, it will try.” One of the most worrisome indications noted include a “lengthy and detailed essay” published by one member of the expanded team, economist David Kreutzer of the Heritage Foundation, claiming “there’s no justification for the climate policies established under the Obama administration.”

Energy Department Refuses Trump Request For Names Of Climate Change Workers.

Politico (12/13, Wolff) reported that a spokesman for the Energy Department said Tuesday that the Department will not furnish the names of Department aides who worked on climate issues to President-elect Trump’s transition team. Among 74 questions the Trump team submitted to the Department last week was a request for “identities of staffers who worked on Obama administration climate policy efforts.” DOE spokesman Eben Burnham-Snyder said in an email that the questions “left many in our workforce unsettled,” and added, “We are going to respect the professional and scientific integrity and independence of our employees at our labs and across our department.”

ABC News (12/13) reports on its website that the White House defended DOE’s decision to withhold the requested information. White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest said, “There were reports about what certainly could have been an attempt to target civil servants, career federal government employees,” adding that the civil servants’ work “transcends the term of any one president” by design.

Reuters (12/13, Shepardson) says the Department’s refusal “could signal a rocky transition for the president-elect’s energy team and potential friction between the new leadership and the staffers who remain in place,” and the Washington Times (12/13, Boyer) sees it as “another sign that the transition isn’t proceeding as smoothly as President Obama professes.” The Trump team’s questionnaire also prompted concern from Tony Reardon, national president of the National Treasury Employees Union, the union for workers at the Department’s Washington headquarters. Reardon said, “My members are upset and have questions about what this means. These are all civil servants who do their jobs. ... They have no wish to be caught up in political winds.” The Washington Post (12/13, Davidson) reports Rep. Steny H. Hoyer questioned the motivation of Trump’s team, warning of “possible retribution for following President Obama’s policies.” Rep. Elijah E. Cummings called it “a scare tactic to intimidate federal employees who are simply doing their jobs and following the facts.” The Post reports that “Trump advisers have urged him to fire feds faster,” and cites civil service expert John Palguta who says “a greater concern is that selected employees could be marginalized, i.e., ignored, by new leadership at the department solely based on unfounded conjecture that those employees cannot be trusted by the new political team.” American Federation of Government Employees President J. David Cox Sr., warned against “a return to the political witch hunts of the 1950s.” The Christian Science Monitor (12/13, Williams) reports “the specific nature of the request and potential high cost of climate change denial have made this situation

unprecedented.” Citing political science professor Todd Eberly at St. Mary’s College, the Monitor reports “DOE would likely not be able to refuse or ignore a similar request under the Trump administration.”

U.S. News & World Report (12/13, Mills), The Hill (12/13, Cama), the AP (12/13), Bloomberg News (12/13, Shields, Dlouhy), NPR (12/13), and the Washington Examiner (12/13, Pappas) also report.

Scientists Try To Preserve Climate Data Amid Fears Trump Administration Will Delete It. The Washington Post (12/13, Dennis) reports that “scientists have begun a feverish attempt” to copy “decades of crucial climate measurements” onto independent servers, fearing the “reams of government data” could “vanish under a hostile Trump administration.” The effort comes as President-elect Trump “has nominated a growing list of Cabinet members who have questioned the overwhelming scientific consensus around global warming,” prompting fears in the scientific community that Trump “could try to alter or dismantle parts of the federal government’s repository of data on everything from rising sea levels to the number of wildfires in the country.”

Holthaus: Effort To Preserve Climate Data A “Firewall.” Meteorologist and journalist Eric Holthaus writes for the Washington Post (12/13, Holthaus) that “there is no remaining doubt that Trump is serious about overtly declaring war on science,” referring to the presidential transition as a “21st-century book burning.” On Saturday, Holthaus writes that he “began an effort to systematically catalogue and preserve as much of the federal government’s publicly available climate science data as possible in the next five weeks.” Holthaus writes that while he doesn’t anticipate the Trump administration intentionally deleting data, he does anticipate “budget cuts that will likely put data in jeopardy.” He calls the effort to preserve data “a firewall against a hostile administration.”

McKibben: Fossil Fuel Divestment Campaign Just Getting Started.

In an op-ed in the Huffington Post, (12/13, McKibben) Bill McKibben touts the successes of the fossil fuel divestment campaign over the past four years and its role going forward. He notes that just this week the Divest-Invest Network “announced that portfolios and endowments with assets reaching \$5 trillion have committed to divest those assets from coal, gas, and oil.”

Analysis Finds Energy Growth Decline Main Cause Of GHG Decrease.

ClimateWire (12/13, Lehmann) reports the Carbon Tax Center released a report concluding that “a historic slowdown in the growth of energy use is helping to drive the United States toward its goals in the Clean Power Plan.” The research found the decrease of electricity consumption, when paired with growing renewable energy sources, “accounts for 58 percent of the power sector’s greenhouse gas reductions since 2005.” Power plants changing fuel from coal to natural gas “accounts for 42 percent of that carbon reduction.” Carbon Tax Center Director Charles Komanoff says the findings indicate energy efficiency and other energy saving programs “are an overlooked ingredient in carbon reductions.” Komanoff said: “It’s really important to credit energy savings, or electricity savings, with the huge role that they’ve played in enabling the power sector to get most of the way to the finish line to the Clean Power Plan.”

Climate Poll Indicates U.S. Should Remain In Paris Climate Agreement.

ClimateWire (12/13, Bolstad) reports the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication and George Mason University’s Center for Climate Change Communication conducted a survey finding Americans are aware of climate change and believe it should be promptly addressed. Seven out of ten participants wish to see the U.S. remain in the Paris climate agreement, and two-thirds of voters want the U.S. to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Anthony Leiserowitz, Director of the Yale

Program on Climate Change Communication, announced voters “surveyed in the spring supported Paris when they last asked the question” and still support climate accords following the presidential election. Leiserowitz said: “Americans do not support and did not vote for the Trump climate agenda as it is coming into shape.” President-elect Trump has already indicated climate change is not a priority and has filled his Cabinet “with climate skeptics,” a sign “that his administration’s approach will be no different from that of its boss, and that it may in fact influence him.”


Energy

EPA Changes Course, Concludes Fracking Can Contaminate Drinking Water.

The New York Times (12/13, Davenport) reports that the newly released final version of an EPA study first issued in 2015 now includes language stating that “hydraulic fracturing...has contaminated drinking water in some circumstances.” In what the Times describes as a “significant change,” the topline conclusion from an earlier version stating there is “no evidence that fracking systemically contaminates water” supplies, was removed from the final version. The report comes as President-elect Trump “has vowed to expand fracking and roll back existing regulations on the process.” The Wall Street Journal (12/13, Harder) says the EPA drew fire from industry leaders for changing its conclusion right before President Obama leaves office. The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (12/13, Daly) reports that the final version “raises more questions than answers.” The EPA clarified that the report “was not designed to be a list of documented impacts,” and that the agency took “pains to avoid taking any conclusions.”

The Hill (12/13, Henry) reports that Thomas Burke, deputy assistant administrator and science adviser at the EPA, told reporters, “there are instances when hydrofracking has impacted drinking water resources. That’s an important conclusion.” However, he added that the study “does not have adequate evidence to really make a conclusive, quantified statement” regarding any “national, systemic conclusion” on the impacts of hydraulic fracturing. The Washington Post (12/13, Harvey) reports that “uncertainties prevented the report from including ‘a full characterization of the severity of impacts.’” Bloomberg News (12/14, Nussbaum) says the possibilities range from “temporary changes in water quality to contamination that made private drinking water wells unusable.” Industry groups criticized the report, as the American Petroleum Institute said, “The agency has walked away from nearly a thousand sources of information from published papers, technical reports and peer reviewed scientific reports demonstrating that industry practices, industry trends and regulatory programs protect water resources at every step.” Reuters (12/13, Volcovici) quotes API upstream director Erik Milito as stating, “It is beyond absurd for the administration to reverse course on its way out the door.” Meanwhile, Energy in Depth spokeswoman Katie Brown “said the overall conclusions remained largely the same.” The AP (12/13, Daly) is less definitive in its coverage, saying that “after six years and more than \$29 million,” the EPA “says it doesn’t know” whether fracking is safe or contaminates drinking water. According to the AP, while the new report “said fracking poses a risk to drinking water in some circumstances...a lack of information precludes a definitive statement on how severe the risk is.”

The Washington Times (12/13, Wolfgang) says the report “does little to settle the debate around the drilling technique.” The Christian Science Monitor (12/13, Paulson) says that the report is unlikely to alter the Trump administration’s position on hydraulic fracturing, however, “it puts a clear paper trail in place.”

Local TV Coverage. KOMO-TV  Seattle (12/13, 7:16 p.m. EST) reports, “A new report out today doesn’t do much to settle the debate over fracking. That’s a controversial oil drilling technique that some critics believe contaminates drinking water. It involves pumping huge volumes of water, sand, and chemicals underground to split open rock formations so the oil and gas will flow. After six

years and more than \$29 million, the Environmental Protection Agency says it doesn't know. The EPA says fracking poses a risk to drinking water in some circumstances, but there's not enough information for a definitive statement." [WNET-TV](#) New York (12/13, 7:05 p.m. EST) and [WJLA-TV](#) Washington (12/13, 5:07 p.m. EST) also covered the story.

Scientific Community Uncertain Of Fracking Research Under Trump Administration.

[E&E Publishing](#) (12/13) reports the scientific community believes President-elect Donald Trump could support new research that touts "innovation in shale oil and gas extraction," but the interest in "science on potential environmental and health effects could be limited," which may affect "the availability of funding for academic researchers from federal agencies." While some scientists are concerned about Trump's beliefs on fossil fuels and climate change, Trevor Penning, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Perelman School of Medicine and National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences grantee, said Trump might present "unexpected support," calling for "a wait and see approach." The article notes the EPA's "report on the effects of hydraulic fracturing on groundwater could help shape the future of science on that particular impact."

Ohio Coal Country Job Prospects May Not Lie With Coal, Despite Trump's Promises.

[NPR](#) (12/13) reports that when Donald Trump recently said, "On energy, we will pursue energy independence and cancel the job-killing restrictions on the production of shale energy, oil, natural gas and clean coal, and we're gonna put the miners of Ohio back to work." Bob Murray, President and CEO of Murray Energy, says Trump "needs to eliminate one-half of the employees in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. He needs to cut the staff drastically in the Department of Interior. He needs to eliminate the Department of Energy altogether." Murray says "if that happens...he can have a couple of thousand people back at work by spring at his now idle mines." But, "even Murray...concedes this: So many coal-fired plants have shut down that the promise of more coal mining jobs will be hard to keep." NPR says "the big talk of new jobs in Belmont County, Ohio, isn't about coal at all. It's about natural gas."

Enforcement

Anaheim Home Improvement Firm Pays \$11K Fine For Lead Paint Violations.

The [San Bernardino \(CA\) Sun](#) (12/13, Madans) reports that the Anaheim-based home improvement firm Powerstar Home Energy Solutions reached an agreement to pay the EPA a \$11,429 penalty for lead paint violations. The firm will also purchase \$34,000 in blood testing equipment for children that will be donated to nearby community health clinics.

Two Massachusetts Facilities Settle With EPA Over Clean Water Act Violations.

The [AP](#) (12/13) reports that two Massachusetts manufacturing facilities agreed to pay \$250,000 in fines to the EPA for improperly discharging stormwater and contaminating groundwater. The facilities also agreed to fund \$200,000 worth in environmental projects.

Grants

San Diego Tech Company Wins \$100K EPA Grant For Cooking Stove.

The [San Diego Business Journal](#) (12/13) reports that the EPA awarded the San Diego-based company Hi-Z Technology Inc. a \$100,000 grant for its cooking stove project, which can generate "up to 10 watts of household electricity while producing only minimal emissions." The phase-one

grant is intended to help Hi-Z develop its technology. According to Hi-Z Vice President Fred Leavitt, "For the typical Indian family, a day's worth of cooking will provide enough energy to power lights for several hours and fully charge one or two cellphones."

Other News

Media Analyses: Perry's DOE Will Favor Fossil Fuels, Shun Renewables.

President-elect Trump will nominate former Texas Gov. Rick Perry as Energy Secretary, according to two sources. Reporting says that Perry will take the Energy Department in a new direction, moving away from a focus on renewable energy and instead favoring fossil fuels. However, media coverage sarcastically and mockingly highlights that Perry had vowed to abolish the agency he will now lead when he was campaigning for president and forgot the name of the agency while arguing that point during a debate.

The Washington Post (12/13, Eilperin, Mufson) says Perry "is likely to shift the department away from renewable energy and toward fossil fuels, whose production he championed while serving as governor for 14 years." Politico (12/13, Watts, Weisburd) reports that conservatives "had favored" Perry for the position, "viewing them as someone with management experience who would be willing to question the agency's status quo." Those advocates, according to Politico, "believe Perry might bring serious reform to the agency because he isn't wedded to energy programs" that conservatives consider "unnecessary, market-distorting schemes." Perry, according to Bloomberg Politics (12/13, Dlouhy), "was known" in Texas "as a proponent of 'American energy.'" Bloomberg says Perry "view[s] viewing energy policy as a economic development goal, while also encouraging investment in alternative sources such as wind and solar."

McClatchy (12/13, Tate) reports that Perry joins EPA Director nominee Scott Pruitt and Secretary of State nominee Rex Tillerson as potential cabinet members that will have the impact of "boost[ing] fossil fuels generally." The three appointees, according to McClatchy, oppose Obama's Clean Power Plan. However, McClatchy adds that the nominees "have been big promoters of the production of natural gas through hydraulic fracturing." The New York Times (12/13) editorializes that Perry "could prove his doubters wrong by expanding investment in breakthrough energy technologies." The Times says that "the big question" is whether Perry and Trump "have the interest or ability to pursue an ambitious agenda, or whether they are determined to carry on an ideological war against climate science."

The Hill (12/13, Cama) says that Perry "would break the tradition [President] Obama set to put scientists in charge at DOE." The Hill notes that current Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz is a nuclear physicist and former Energy Secretary Stephen Chu is a scientist. However, the New York Times (12/13, Davenport) says "it is not clear how" Perry's "experience would translate into leading what is also a major national security agency." The Times notes that the Energy Department "plays the leading role in designing nuclear weapons and in ensuring the safety and reliability of the nation's aging nuclear arsenal."

The Hill (12/13, Fabian, Neidig) reports White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest "took a dig" at Perry as he "appeared to echo outside doubts about Perry's qualifications." The comment came as Earnest "was defending the Energy Department's rejection of a request by Trump transition team" to identify staffers involved in climate change programs, saying the career civil servants should be "evaluated based on merit and not on politics." Earnest continued, "I'm sure that the president-elect used the same kind of criteria when choosing his new Department of Energy secretary as well ... don't you think?"

In brief reports on Perry's nomination, NBC Nightly News (12/13, story 2, 0:50, Holt) and the CBS Evening News (12/13, story 2, 0:55, Pelley) showed a clip from the 2011 GOP primary debate that shows Perry unable to remember the Energy Department's name when arguing that it should be eliminated. The Los Angeles Times (12/13, Halper) says that Perry "holds the Department of Energy in such low regard" that "he famously couldn't even remember it was on the list of federal agencies he wanted to eliminate" during a presidential primary debate five years ago. The Times says it was Perry's "disdain for the Energy Department – or, rather, his inability to articulate it – that helped sink" his campaign in 2012. The Times quotes Perry as saying at that time, "It's three agencies of government, when I get there, that are gone: Commerce, Education and, the, uh, what's the third one there?" Perry then said, "The third agency of government I would do away with — the Education, uh the, uh, Commerce, and let's see — I can't... the third one, I can't. I'm sorry ... oops."

Reuters (12/13) reports that Perry "was a fierce critic of Trump" before he dropped out of the 2016 campaign, calling the President-elect "'a cancer on conservatism' who offered 'a toxic mix of demagoguery and mean-spiritedness and nonsense.'" Reuters adds that Trump "also had harsh things to say about Perry during the campaign," which included "belittling his eye glasses" by saying, "He put on glasses so people will think he's smart."

Manchin Says He Can Best Serve West Virginia In Senate. The AP (12/13) reports Sen. Joe Manchin on Tuesday said he will remain in the Senate after being considered for Energy Secretary. Manchin said in a statement that he was "humbled to be considered for the secretary of energy position," but he can best West Virginia in the Senate.

Trump Reportedly Offers Interior Secretary Position To Zinke.

President-elect Trump has reportedly offered the Interior Secretary position to Rep. Ryan Zinke, but media coverage says the lawmaker has not announced whether he will accept. Reporting universally highlights that Zinke is a proponent of keeping public lands under federal ownership and will be charged with carrying out Trump's pro-drilling plans.

The AP (12/13, Pace, Thomas) reports that two sources with knowledge of the offer say though it is not certain if Zinke has accepted the offer yet and Politico (12/13, Vogel, Severns, Bade) says the sources indicated that Zinke "has given no indication as to which way he is leaning." The Washington Times (12/13, Morton) reports Zinke "is also being eyed" by Republicans as a "potential challenger" for Sen. Jon Tester's Senate seat. The Hill (12/13, Hagen) reports Zinke's nomination would give Senate Democrats "a slight boost in a tough cycle in two years." The Hill says Sen. Jon Tester "will still face a tough reelection race, but taking Zinke's name out of the mix would be a disadvantage for Republicans."

Reuters (12/13, Beech, Volcovici, Cornwell) reports Zinke favors "keeping public lands under federal ownership," which places him "at odds" with some Republicans. Zinke's position, according to Reuters, "on opening up more federal lands to increased drilling and mining" is still "unclear." However, the New York Times (12/13, Davenport) reports Zinke "would be charged with carrying out the aggressive pro-drilling agenda championed by Mr. Trump on the campaign trail." That approach, according to the Times, "would represent a sharp reversal of the role of the Interior Department under President Obama, who used the agency to advance his climate change, clean energy and land conservation agenda."

The Billings (MT) Gazette (12/13, Lutey) reports "Montanans were quick to respond to the news." Becky Edwards of Montana Mountain Mamas "said her outdoor group of has worked well with Zinke, even when they didn't agree." Edwards said Zinke had "an open ear and helpful hand on issues such as protecting access...keeping public lands in public hands." Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation CEO David Allen wrote on Facebook, "We'd really like to see him at Interior, given his

understanding of and support for sportsmen, public lands and natural resource issues.” However, the Gazette says the Montana Wilderness Association “was pessimistic” when spokesman Ted Brewer said Zinke “has a checkered record when it comes to public lands...but has taken a few good votes against lands transfer and for the Land and Water Conservation Fund.”

Trump’s Energy Team Heavy On Fossil Fuels, Lighter On Coal. The Christian Science Monitor (12/13, Trumbull) reports that “the cabinet picks of Donald Trump send a pretty unequivocal signal in support of fossil fuels,” but “more on oil and natural gas than on coal.” Reports that Trump will tap Montana Rep. Ryan Zinke to head the Interior Department “where opening federal lands for energy production is a key part of the president-elect’s agenda” is “one exception” among energy and environment picks.

Toxics/TSCA

American Chemical Council Blasts EPA’s Testing Regime Under New TSCA.

Greenwire (12/14, Dunsmith) reports that the American Chemistry Council took issue with the EPA’s interpretation of Section 5 of the overhauled Toxic Substances Control Act in a recent blog post, “asserting that the agency has failed to review compounds expediently enough.” The industry group also chastised the agency for “veering into ‘remote or speculative’ territory.”

Water

Millions Of Americans Get Water From Small Operators That Are Not Subject To The Same Regulations Regarding Lead Levels As Larger Operators.

In an over 4,000 word article, USA Today (12/13, Ungar, Nichols) reports that 4 million Americans get water from small operators that are not subject to the same federal regulations regarding lead levels as larger operators, according to an investigation conducted by the USA Today Network. The article shares examples of communities that have been impacted by the different standards for small operators.

Lead Detected In Service Lines In East Chicago.

The AP (12/13) reports that high lead levels were detected in 18 homes in the Indiana city of East Chicago. Officials says the lead came from service lines “just outside or even inside homes,” but not the city water main. Mayor Anthony Copeland has requested an emergency declaration from the state in order to receive more funding.

University Of Michigan, Google Develop Flint Water Crisis App.

MLive (MI) (12/9, Johnson) reported that “researchers introduced a mobile application Thursday and a website to help residents easily find Flint water crisis information.” MLive explains that “Mywater-Flint is an Android application and website, Mywater-Flint.com, developed by researchers at the University of Michigan’s Flint and Ann Arbor campuses and funded by Google.org.” The report says that “users can access information regarding Flint’s water crisis including a city-wide map showing where lead has been found in drinking water, where service line workers have replaced infrastructure and where crews currently working.” UM-Flint Assistant Professor Mark Allison said, “It’s not an easy thing to do. ... You have to go downtown and pick up a special bottle, and then you have to go drop it off somewhere and the testing process itself is complicated. You can’t just use any pipe in the house. The app tells you how to test it, and exactly where test kits are available.”

Rep. Kildee Succeeded In Getting Federal Aid For Flint Passed.

In an over 1,400 word article, the Washington Post (12/13, Debonis) reports how Rep. Dan Kildee (D-MI) successfully pushed Congress to help Flint by passing legislation offering \$170 million in aid to the city. The aid was “the culmination of more than a year’s work” by Kildee and others to keep “the issue at the top of the Democrats’ priority list in 2016.” The article includes an interview with Kildee about the Flint water crisis and what he has done to address the situation.

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